

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4-9 and 11-27 are pending in this application.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11-14 and 16-27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,925,189 (Nguyen et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,684,104 (Micard). (It is believed that the Examiner intended to include claim 9 in the above rejection.) Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

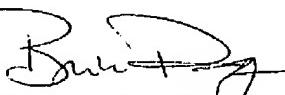
The claimed invention and U.S. Patent No. 5,925,189 (Nguyen et al.) were, at the time the invention of this application was made, owned by (or subject to a duty of assignment to) Applied Materials, Inc., the assignee of this application. It is noted that U.S. Patent No. 5,925,189 (Nguyen et al.) qualifies as prior art relative to this application, if at all, only under subsection (e) of 35 U.S.C. §102. Accordingly, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(c), U.S. Patent No. 5,925,189 (Nguyen et al.) is disqualified from being used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103 against the claims of this application. (See MPEP Sec. 706.02(l)(2)). It is therefore requested that the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11-14 and 16-27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on U.S. Patent No. 5,925,189 (Nguyen et al.) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The Examiner has rejected claims 8 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nguyen et al. and Micard in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,413,671 (Ketchum). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As stated above, the Nguyen et al. reference is disqualified as prior art as part of a 35 U.S.C. 103 rejection. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 8 and 15 be withdrawn.

Applicants believe the pending claims are now in condition for allowance, and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the same. A separate Request for Extension of Time is enclosed herewith with authorization to charge the requisite extension fee to Deposit Account No. 04-1696. No other fees are believed necessary. However, if any other fees are required, please charge Deposit Account No. 04-1696 accordingly. Applicants encourage the Examiner to telephone the undersigned attorney should any issues remain.

Respectfully Submitted,



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